

10
A
LETTER
TO THE
FREEHOLDER

Occasioned by the
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A
LETTER
TO THE
FREEHOLDER.



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LETTER

NUMBER



T O

Mr. T--- G---

SIR,

ABOUT the latter end
of May, I was desired
by an Ingenious Gen-
tleman, whose Performances
have always been received by
the Town with Applause, to
hand the following Letter to the
Freeholder: I performed my
A 3 Trust

vi DEDICATION.

Trust faithfully, and was surprized to find, that that approved Author made no use of it. Hereupon I went to the Printer, who told me, he had received express Orders not to insert any thing in the Paper, which might be construed a Personal Reflection, on the meanest Person living, and that he had further Orders to avoid entering into Controversy; but, however, he would take some Measures, to let the Gentleman who constantly favoured him with the Political Parts of the Paper, to see this Letter which was address'd to him, and receive his Opinion directly.

Mr.

DEDICATION. vii

Mr. Freeholder return'd the Letter, with grateful Acknowledgements of the Favour designed him, and an earnest Request that his Ingenious Correspondent would be pleased, at his leisure Hours, to assist him, in that heavy Task he had undertaken merely for the Publick good : But for the Reasons before cited, he could not accept of this Present.

The Printer was at this Time taken into Custody, the Copy of this Letter was found in his Pocket, and laid before one of the Secretaries of State. Upon the Printer's enlargement,
I de-

viii DEDICATION.

I desired him to make a separate Pamphlet of it, which could no ways be Excepted against by his Author, who was not accountable for any Thing that did not appear in his Paper. To this, he answered, That it was out of Time; that an Answer came too late, when the Thing answered was forgot. This had some shew of Reason, and utterly silenc'd me.

*But Sir, upon viewing the Great Alteration in Print and Paper, as well as in the Strain of your late Performances; I recovered the following Letter from the Printer, to have the Opportunity of Congratulating
you*

DEDICATION. ix

you upon being Bought off, from
 an ungrateful Party; as well
 as to Congratulate the Party on
 your Deserting them. Don't
 take it ill, Sir, that I Treat you
 with the Refusals of the Free-
 holder, I was inclinable to
 wait upon you, with a Comple-
 ment upon your being admitted
 into the most honourable Band
 of P---ners; but could not tell
 how to appear before you, with-
 out a Present. I therefore
 humbly beg your Acceptance of
 this, which, if you make a pro-
 per Use of it, will do you more
 Good than your Sa---y. For
 alas! The Wages of Sin is
 Death, but the wholesome Re-
 proofs of this Letter, teach you,
 B that

X DEDICATION.

that excellent Sum of Philosophy, Know thy self; they shew you as it were in a Glass, that you are a superficial mercenary Writer, which at Present is the Opinion of most Men, but has from your first Appearance, been the firm Belief of,

S I R,

Your great Admirer

I. T.



A
LETTER
TO THE
FREEHOLDER.

SIR,

H Was last Night in Company with a young Gentleman of very promising Talents, the former Part of the Evening he exerted himself very earnestly upon the best way of dressing a Mutton Chop, made a Dissertation upon the Usefulness of warm Plates, and

B

said



said several ingenious Things in Favour of our *English* way of Eating.

HAVING thus exercised his reasoning Faculties, and finding them very strong, just before ten of the Clock, he declared against the *Mosaical History*, as an idle incredible jumble of impertinent Things, fit only to amuse weak superstitious Minds.

As for the *New Testament*, it contained nothing that we had any need of; Natural Reason, he said, did sufficiently inform us in all the Duties of Morality.

UPON my humbly desiring to be heard a Word or two in favour of the Bible, he pulls out of his Pocket the *London-Journal* of *Saturday* last, and desires me to answer that, if I must be answering.

THIS put me in mind of the poor Wretch that was taken stealing in a Church, with *Cato's* Letter in defence of Sacrilege in his Pocket.

Now

N O W would you not have laught at this poor Thief, if you had heard him afterwards declaring against the Gospel-Revelation, that we had no need of it, *Human Reason* being sufficient to instruct us in the Duties of Life ?

Y E T this he might have done with as good a Grace as my young Disputant, who never so much as intended a wise or a virtuous Thing in his Days.

H O W E V E R, at his Desire, I have once more taken up my Friend C A T O, and have made these Notes upon the Sublimity, Erudition, and *Logic* of his Performance on *Saturday* the 19th Instant, as follows.

C A T O tells us his Design is, to free and manumit Mankind from the many Frauds, Impositions, and Delusions, which interrupts their Happyness --- As the Fears of Spirits, Apparitions, Witches, which more or less afflict and terrifie the greatest part of the World.

W H A T

WHAT World does *Cato* mean? The World of Children? Or does he think the greatest part of the City of *London*, or of his Readers, are afflicted and terrysied with the Fears of Spirits, Apparitions, and Witches?

CONSEQUENTLY, says *Cato*, it will conduce much to their Ease and Felicity, if I can lay these Phantoms.

A Treatise against *Hawks* and *Kites*, writ by a good Hand, would tend mightily to quiet the Minds of his Majesty's Subjects.

DOES *Cato* know how to raise the Stocks, or prevent Plots? Can he remove the Popular Impressions and Fears of long Trains of Artillery, and lay the Phantom of Camps and Standing Armies? That would be something. Has any of *Cato's* Friends been lately frightened with any Apparitions? Or, does he take his Party to be bewitched? If *Cato* could catch Ratts, he would be of great Use to his Country; but there are so few Houses
haunted

haunted, that if he can only *lay Phantoms*, the Immortal *Cato* will become a Phantom himself.

There is, says Cato, a strange Propensity in Human Nature to Prodigy.

There is a strange Propensity in *Cato's* Nature to Nonsense; for can Human Nature be said to have a *Propensity* to that which frights it? Or desire that which it dreads? Why is not Thirst frightened at Liquor, or the Appetite of Hunger shock'd at the sight of Victuals, but because there is a *Natural Propensity* to both? But *Cato* says, *there is this Natural Propensity to whatever else causes surprise and Astonishment.* How lucky therefore was this *late Plot*, and how well suited to gratifie the *Propensity* of Human Nature, that it had so much of *Surprize* and *Astonishment* in it.

Cato goes on, in vertue of this Propensity, *we have immediately recourse to Miracle, which solves all our Doubts, gratifies*

tifies our *Pride*, by accounting for our *Ignorance*.

The solid *Cato* put these Lines together, only to join *Pride* and *Ignorance* with *Miracles*, for they have no Sense in themselves; nor lead to any.

We have, says he, *immediate recourse to Miracle*; he forgets to tell us, when, or why, or where, this happened.

Let us suppose then, a particular Case, that *Cato* and I had been present, when our Saviour turned the Water into Wine, I shou'd have had *Immediate recourse to Miracle*, and *Cato* must have said, as he does here, that it was only to solve my *Doubts*, and gratifie my *Pride*, by accounting for my *Ignorance*.

But pray, Friend *Cato*, why all this ill Language? For suppose the Water had not been changed into Wine, and I had asked your Wisdom what it was, and you had *immediate recourse to the Nature of Water*, and had said that it was Water: Might I not tell you, that you
said

said it was Water, only to solve your Doubts, and gratify your Pride, by accounting for your Ignorance?

For if I, seeing Water changed into Wine, believe it to be the Effect of that Power, which is superior to the Nature of Things, is there any thing more of solving my Doubts, or gratifying my Pride, than in allowing Water to be Water, and Gold to be Gold?

Or does Cato shew that he has no Doubts, no Pride, no Ignorance, because he can make a Jest of Miracles, and take Water, and Water that is turned into Wine to be all one? For many Ages, says the Patriot Cato, the Phænomena of Meteors, Eclipses and Comets seemed unaccountable, and the Causes of Thunder and Lightning were unknown to the World; would you not think that this was to introduce some mighty Change that has happened lately? But, says Cato, with great Wisdom, as they are to most People in it at this Day. Oh the depth of Philosophy!

For many Ages People eat and drank, gap'd and star'd, ----- just as they do at this Day.

Oh that *Cato* would but write a Treatise upon the ancient and modern Learning!

But to go on, *Great Guns*, says he, *were esteem'd by the Americans to be angry Deities, Watches to be living Animals, and Paper and Ink to be Spirits.* Well, what then? what follows? Why this is *Cato's* Proof that therefore there are no *Apparitions* or *Spirits*. For he tells you, that he intends to remove your Apprehensions of these things; but if this will not pass for Proof, you may e'en be as frightened as ever you was, for him.

Does *Cato* prove that *Spirits* are a Jest, because the *Americans* took *Paper* and *Ink* to be *Spirits*? And is it not as good an Argument that there is no punishing *God*, because the same *Americans* took *Great Guns* to be *angry Deities*, or no *Animals*, because they thought *Watches* to be alive?

All

All Nature, says the profound *Cato*, is in a perpetual Rotation. This is a pretty Discovery, and you will like it the better, when you see how *Cato* came by it. *We cannot*, says he, *know what Nature can spontaneously produce, or how she works; we see only the outside and film of Things, and no more of them than what is necessary to the Preservation and Convenience of our selves, &c. Almighty God hath hid all the rest from our Eyes, to baffle our foolish Curiosity.*

So that *Cato* who knows nothing, who sees only the *outside and film of Things*, who knows not how *Nature works*, who calls the Enquiry into it a foolish Curiosity, does, by virtue of this Ignorance assure you, *That all Nature is in perpetual Rotation.*

If you ask *Cato* the contexture of a Straw, he confesses his Ignorance, and tells you, that he only sees the *outside and film of Things*; but as for *all Nature*, that he is a perfect Master of, and can be

very positive that it is in *perpetual Rotation*.

Is not this a pretty Fellow to talk to, an whole Kingdom?

Well may a *cowardly Pimp* pretend to be honest old *Cato*, a *Pennyless Wretch* take upon him to direct the *Treasury*; a *Squanderer* of his own vile Wages, to state the *Oeconomy* of Government; A *Slave* to every Lust and Passion, to assert the Liberties of human Nature; whilst a silly Scribler shall pretend to affirm, that *All Nature is in perpetual Rotation*, upon the sole Qualification of knowing the nature of Nothing.

If *some Men*, says the elegant *Cato*, could follow *Scents* like *Dogs*, or see in the dark like *Cats*, &c. how many things would they know and do unaccountable to the rest of *Mankind*? If *Almighty God* had thought fit to have bestowed upon any *Man* one or more Senses above the rest of his *Species*, many of his *Actions* must have appeared miraculous to them.

Cato's

Cato's Wit seeming here to be on the stretch, I shall not over-look it, but try it in a particular Case.

I see, for Instance, our Blessed Saviour raise *Lazarus* from the dead, I take it to be a Miracle: Pho, pho, says *Cato*, what do ye talk? Suppose Men could follow *Scents like Dogs*, or see in the dark like *Cats*, how many things would they know and do unaccountable to the rest of *Mankind*?

Having done this Justice to the Argument, I shall put a Case my self not unlike it, without going quite so low as to *Cats* and *Dogs*.

I see, for Instance *G---d---n*, *T---d*, *L---* *M---*, with some others, all contemplating *Cato* nailed to the Pillory, all of them affirming and averring that it is an actual real Punishment.

Pho, pho, Gentlemen, says I, what do you talk? Let us suppose *Cato* to be nothing but *Sound*, that he is meer *Wind*, and has no more of a *Head* than a *Fart* has;

has; how many times may such one be put in the Pillory, and seem to the rest of Mankind to be punished, and yet nothing at all be in it?

This I take to be as solid an Argument against the existence of all Pillory-Punishment, as *Cato's Cats and Dogs* are against the reality of Miracles.

Again, Gentlemen, You the said G--d--n, T---d, M---- aver that you saw *Cato* set in the Pillory.

Pray Gentlemen be a little more Philosophical, and not so positive. For has not *Cato* told us Christians, *that Bodies by Reflection and Refraction, appear otherwise, and in other Places, than they are in Nature? Is there any of our Senses that do not deceive us?* Do not you, in order to confute all Miracles tell us, *That strait Things in the Water appear crooked?* May not *Cato* therefore, whom you take to be in the Pillory, be only standing on his Head, with his Arms set out to keep up his Body, and only appears

appears to you to stand upright, by the nature of the *Medium* thro' which you look? Will you charge the Magistracy with setting *Cato* in the Pillory, when according to the Laws of *Reflection* and *Refraction*, you can never be sure either that you saw a Pillory, or *Cato* in it?

But to go on;

Whenever therefore, says the divine Cato, we hear of, or see any surprising Appearances, or Events in Nature, which we cannot trace and connect to our immediate Causes, we are not to call in supernatural Powers, and interest Heaven or Hell in the Solution, to save our Credit, and cover our Folly, &c.

Had not *Cato* used me to Nonsense, I should think he was here writing Booby; for, if recurring to supernatural Powers in surprising Appearances *be saving our Credit, and covering our Folly*, surely the contrary Practice, must, by the Rule of Contraries, be rising our Credit, and exposing our Folly.

Is *Cato* so little of a modern Philosopher, or so much of an *old Atheist*, as not to know, that the most common Appearances and Events in the material World, cannot be accounted for without calling in *supernatural Powers*? Does he not know that all the Effects and Changes in the vegetable, animate and inanimate part of the World are brought about by *Gravitation*? And does he not know that *Gravitation* is only another Word, for the immediate Influence of God?

What a Philosopher therefore is this thing of a *Cato*, to caution his Readers against *calling in supernatural Powers* to account for *surprising Appearances*, when Philosophy teaches us, That the falling of a Stone to the Ground cannot be accounted for any other way?

Cato goes on, *We are not to believe that He, (viz. God) miraculously interposes in the Course of human Affairs, but when he pleases to intimate to us, that He does not intend to do so.* That

That is, whatever Blessings we enjoy, whatever Dangers we have escap'd, we are not to believe that they are owing to God, unless he pleases to tell us so in every particular Instance.

How many *Thanksgiving-Days* have we had since the *Revolution*, for God's prospering our Arms, and for his miraculous Interposition in favour of the *Protestant Succession*; tho' God never told us, that He *did so*, or *intended to do so*.

For ought I know, this Assertion of *Cato's* may be Reasonable; I am sure it reflects upon all the *Thanksgiving Days*; let *Cato* look to that.

Cato says, We may believe God to interpose in human Affairs, when he *intimates to us*, that he *does*, or *intends to do so*. But pray, great *Cato*, dare you tell us when we may allow that God speaks to us? I know you dare not, you dare not allow of any Language from Heaven, nor upon your Principles can any be allowed. For it is impossible for

D

God

God to reveal himself to us any other way, than by *surprising Appearances*, &c. But *Cato* forbids us having any Thoughts of the Deity on such Occasions. *There is no Occasion*, says he, *to recur to supernatural Causes, to account for that which may be so easily accounted for, by our Ignorance of natural Ones, the Fraud, or Folly of others, and the Deception of our selves.*

If *Cato* is told of *Miracles*, he answers, that the *Fraud* and *Folly* of People is Reason enough against believing them. If he himself should see the greatest Miracle that was ever related, his Excuse is this, I don't know natural Causes, therefore this may be no Miracle; or, if you don't like this Answer, he will tell you, he may be deceived, and only fancy he saw some strange Thing.

Now who would not wish to have his Soul with such a Philosopher as this!

Let us put a Case.

Cato sees *Gallus* pick the Pocket of *Titus*, he is cited as an Evidence; *Cato* says.

says he cannot affirm that *Gallus* pick'd the Pocket of *Titus*. He indeed saw *Gallus* put his Hand in *Titus's* Pocket, and that when the said *Gallus* withdrew his Hand, there was a Purse came out along with it, contiguous to the Palm of his Hand; but as he is *ignorant of natural Causes*; he cannot tell, but that the said Purse, by the *perpetual rotation of Nature*, or some Cause not yet discovered by our narrow Capacities, might have come out of the Pocket of *Titus*, at that Moment of Time, though the Hand of *Gallus* had not been contiguous to it.

2^{ly}, He says he cannot be an Evidence, because, tho' he saw all this, yet he might be deceived; and instead of seeing *Gallus*, *Titus*, the *Hand* and the *Purse*, he might only fancy that he saw them.

With the same common Sense, with the same Integrity, does this *Cato* here refuse to be an Evidence in this supposed Case against a Thief, that the Im-

mortal Cato denies his Assent to Miracles, Apparitions and Revelations.

And he that trusting to this Philosophy of *Cato's* should turn Thief, depending upon the Impossibility of all Evidence, would be just as *Wise* and *Virtuous*, as he that trusting to *Cato's* Impossibility of proving Miracles, should venture to be damned if ever there were any such Things.

Cato says, *We must not introduce Demons into the System of the Universe, to trapan and mislead God's Creatures, and to thwart and oppose himself:*

And why so, thou Oracle of the Age? Is it not agreeable to the Nature of God to permit this? How comes it then that the same God should permit your *Cato's*, *Cataline's*, *Cromwell's*, *Committee-Men*, *Serquestrators*, *Pimps*, *Parasites*, *Knights of the Post*, and such like?

Do not all these *trapan* and *mislead* God's Creatures, and *thwart* and *oppose* himself? If therefore the Permission of such
vile

vile Creatures as these are consistent with the Providence of God, why not the Permission of evil Spirits?

I was much diverted with *Cato* for saying very gravely, *I have often almost fancied that Men may be dieted into Opinions.*

Prithee, dear *Cato*, why so modest? Why only, almost fancy'd? Indeed you are very sure of it, you know that Men have been dieted into Opinions: You remember the Time and Place where you used to come to Dinner to receive yours: You remember that you had no Opinions, but what came from a certain Table; and that when that Feasting was at an end, there was an end of your Opinions.

You know that there is an Order of Men called *Parasites*, who always were dieted into Opinions. The Moderns call these People *Gordonians*; all this you know; and you know also that a certain Person called himself *Cato*, and pretended to be

Censor.

(20)

Censor Morum, to Great Britain, who amongst his Acquaintance never once incurred the Suspicion of a single Virtue.

Dear Freeholder,

May 22. St. James's
Street.

I am

Your humble Servant,

J. B.



7231



